



*Breastfeeding  
and Returning to Work*



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## ONGRATULATIONS!

You have given your baby the best possible start in life – by breastfeeding. In fact, three out of four women in Texas start out breastfeeding their infants and many of them continue after returning to work. You can too – and this booklet is designed to help you do just that.



The longer you breastfeed, the fewer illnesses your child will have and the less work you will miss. Did you know that as soon as you pick up a toy at your child's day care, your body begins to make breast milk with antibodies to protect your baby from the germs living on that toy? That's how great your milk is. Your child's risk of developing diabetes and obesity also decrease with every additional month you breastfeed.

There are benefits for you too. You will continue to burn calories to help you lose your pregnancy weight easier, you will have a reduced risk of ovarian cancer later in life, and your risk of breast cancer decreases more with every additional month you breastfeed. You will also be able to provide something for your infant that no one else can provide. Your milk is not just food, it is protection. You can't buy that in a can at the grocery store.

**The American Academy of Pediatrics  
recommends women breastfeed their  
infants for at least one year.**

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*“I’m glad I continued breastfeeding after returning to work. I love the closeness I have with my baby when I’m breastfeeding and I love having one thing that I can do for my baby that no one else can, especially considering I’m back at work and other people are helping take care of him. Also it burns calories to help lose that pregnancy weight. Plus it’s the most natural, healthiest food my baby can have.”*

*Elizabeth Moorehead*





## *Will working and breastfeeding work for me?*

Moms in almost every line of work are continuing to breastfeed, including:

- ✧ College and high school students
- ✧ Teachers
- ✧ Waitresses
- ✧ Administrative staff
- ✧ Members of the Armed Forces
- ✧ Heads of corporations
- ✧ Well-known celebrities

With a little planning, you too can successfully return to work and continue breastfeeding.





## *Will I need a breast pump?*

If you will be away from your baby long enough that you regularly miss one feeding or more, then you may need an electric breast pump.

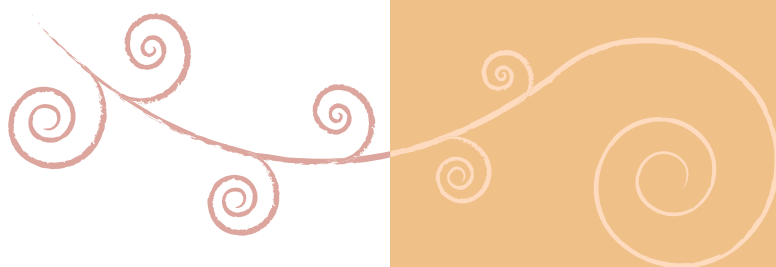
## *Where can I get a breast pump?*

Breastfeeding moms who are returning to work or school are eligible for free breast pumps from the WIC office. Talk to the WIC staff for more information.



*“ I never considered weaning because I was returning to work. It’s so easy to pump at work and it’s good to know that I’m taking care of my baby even while I’m away from her.”*

*Kirsy Traweek*



## *Do I also need to know how to hand express my milk?*

Every breastfeeding mom needs to learn to hand express their milk. Even if you have a pump, you never know when it might stop working or you may forget a part of the pump at home.

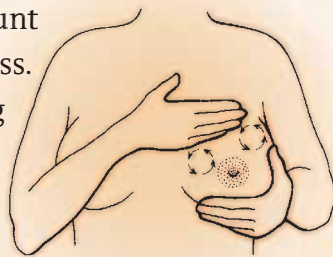
### *To hand express:*

1. Use a clean container with a wide opening to collect your milk. A margarine tub works well for hand expression. With practice you can express directly into a plastic bag or bottle.

2. Wash your hands.

3. Place a warm washcloth on your breasts to help your milk flow.

4. Massage your breast to help increase the amount of milk you express. Do this by placing one hand under your breast for support. Apply gentle pressure, using a circular motion with your other hand. Massage from several starting points, always working from the chest toward the nipple. Repeat on your other breast.



5. Hold the clean container near your breast. With your other hand, place your fingers and thumb about one inch behind the nipple. Press back toward your ribs and squeeze in and down, rolling your fingers and thumb toward the nipple. This will express milk into your clean container.



6. Rotate the placement of your fingers and thumb around your nipple to empty all areas of the breast. When milk flow slows down, switch to your other breast.

Expressing your milk gets easier with practice. Don't be discouraged if you can only express a small amount in the first few days. If hand expression is not working for you, talk to the WIC staff. You may need a breast pump.

## *What steps should I take before I return to work?*

- ☞ Take as long a maternity leave as you can.
- ☞ Breastfeed often to build up a good milk supply.
- ☞ When your baby is 2 to 6 weeks old, let another person feed your baby a bottle of breastmilk. This will help your baby get used to the bottle.
- ☞ Talk to your boss and work out a schedule so you can pump or nurse your baby on site at work. If you can, talk to your boss before you have your baby.
- ☞ Do at least one practice run of leaving your baby with your caregiver for several hours. Do this in the morning about when you would normally go to work. Take this time to do something special for yourself; a nap, a movie, time with a friend or your spouse.



*Breastfeed often to build up a good milk supply.*



*Let another person feed your baby a bottle.*

- ☞ Consider asking your employer if you can start back to work part time at first, job-share with another employee, or telecommute or work from home.
- ☞ Make your first day back to work a Thursday if you can. Having a short first week will help you and your baby adjust.



## *Is my employer required by law to allow me to express my milk at work?*

Most employers are happy to accommodate their breastfeeding employees, but the law does not require them to. So it is important that you talk to your employer about your return.

## *Are more employers allowing women to express their milk at work?*

Yes. More employers are helping their female employees return to work and continue breastfeeding. There are several reasons for this.

- ✧ There are more women in the workforce than ever before.
  - Sixty percent of working women have children under age 3.
  - Seventy eight percent are employed full time.
  - The female workforce increased eighty percent over the last 20 years.
- ✧ More women are choosing to breastfeed.
  - In 2004, over 75 percent of moms in Texas chose to breastfeed their infants.
  - Approximately 37 percent continue for at least 6 months.
  - Over 20 percent continue for 12 months or longer.
- ✧ Most employers are aware of the health benefits of breastfeeding.
- ✧ By supporting breastfeeding, employers
  - reduce their health-care costs,
  - lower absenteeism,
  - improve employee morale, and
  - increase productivity.



## *What is the best way to talk to my employer?*

It's natural to be nervous when it comes to talking about breastfeeding with your employer. After all, it's not a topic that comes up normally at the office. Here are some simple steps successful moms suggest:

1. Before talking to your employer or school, tell your family that you want to continue breastfeeding after you return and ask them for their support. Knowing you have their support will give you confidence to talk to your employer.
2. Do you know of others mother you work with who used a breast pump at work? Talk to them about how they did it.
3. Schedule an appointment with your employer to discuss your return.
4. Before your appointment, practice what you plan to say to your employer with your friends or family. This will help you ease your nerves and be prepared.
5. At your appointment:
  - ✧ Talk to your employer about pumping at work or nursing on site.
  - ✧ Explain why breastfeeding is important to you and your baby.
  - ✧ Offer to come in early and stay late to make up for the time you need to pump.
  - ✧ If possible, bring in a plan that includes how often and where you would pump and store your milk so that your employer does not have to do any work.
  - ✧ Discuss any questions or concerns your employer has.



## What questions should I ask my employer?

### 1. Is there a private space to pump? If one is not available:

#### ☞ Use an office.

If the door doesn't lock, hang a sign outside your door when you are pumping, or ask if your employer could have a lock installed for privacy.



Use an office.

#### ☞ Use a cubicle.

Use a shower curtain rod or wooden dowel from a hardware store to hang a large curtain outside your cubicle when you need to pump.



Use a cubicle.

#### ☞ Use a bathroom.

For reasons of safety and hygiene, a bathroom should only be used for pumping breastmilk if there are no other options available.

### 2. Will I be able to arrange my schedule to pump at work or nurse on site?

- ☞ You will need to pump the same number of times that you are currently breastfeeding.
- ☞ Most moms will need to use their morning and afternoon break times and part of their lunch hour to express their milk.
- ☞ With a double-sided electric pump, each pumping session will take about 15-30 minutes.
- ☞ Be prepared to offer to come in early or stay late to make up for the time.

### 3. Where should I store my milk?

- ☞ It is safe to store breastmilk in a shared staff refrigerator.
- ☞ An insulated bag with ice packs can be used to store freshly expressed milk for up to 24 hours.



Shared staff refrigerator



## *What about child care?*

- ✧ Find a child-care provider that is close to your work and supports breastfeeding.
- ✧ Visit your child-care center a few times. Touch toys and items in the center. Your milk will build up immunities to germs in the child-care center.
- ✧ Take your baby to the child-care center to get your baby used to it.



## *When should I start pumping?*

- ✧ Start pumping and storing your milk about two weeks before returning to work.
- ✧ Pump both breasts at the same time or pump one breast while your baby is nursing on the other. You will produce more milk that way.
- ✧ If your job does not have a room for pumping, find another quiet place to pump.
- ✧ Plan to pump your milk at work as often as you would nurse your baby if you were home.
- ✧ Look at a photo of your baby while you pump at work and smell an article of her clothing.
- ✧ Listen to a recording of your baby's voice.
- ✧ Hand-express or pump your milk before your breasts feel too full.



## How do I store my milk?

- Wash your hands before you hand express or pump your milk.
- Put your breastmilk in clean bottles or breastmilk storage bags. Store about

- 2-4 ounces per bottle or bag for a 6 week old
- 4-6 ounces for a 3 month old
- 5-8 ounces for a 6 month old

The fat in the milk will rise to the top of the container. This is normal.

- Label containers with the date pumped and the baby's name.
- Use the oldest milk first.
- At work, store breastmilk in a cooler with ice packs or in the company refrigerator.
- If your bottled breastmilk smells sour, throw it out.
- Thaw breastmilk in the refrigerator, under running water that is gradually warmed, or in a cup or bowl of warm, not hot water.

*Never  
microwave  
breastmilk.*

**Breastmilk storage guidelines**

	Refrigerator	Freezer	Deep Freezer	Portable Cooler with Ice Packs
Fresh Breastmilk	5 days	3 months	6 months	24 hours
Thawed Breastmilk	24 hours	Do not refreeze	Do not refreeze	8 hours



## How do I keep up a good milk supply?

- 🌀 Breastfeeding your baby is the best way to make more milk. The more often you breastfeed, the more milk you will make. Nurse often when you and your baby are together.
- 🌀 Be sure to pump your milk at work as often as you would nurse your baby at home.
- 🌀 Massage your breasts while pumping. This can increase your milk supply as well as the fat content of your milk.
- 🌀 Take good care of your breast pump. Read the pump instructions or watch the video so you know when to replace the valve or if you need to use a larger breast flange. Both of these things can affect your milk supply.
- 🌀 Some moms will take breast milk vacations. This means taking a day or two off work so you can be together with your baby and breastfeed often for a few days in a row. This is a great way to increase milk supply.



*Nurse often when you and your baby are together.*



*“I was not able to pump my milk at work, but I didn’t completely wean. I breastfed her when we were together and she got my pumped milk and some formula at day care. The times that I can nurse her are so special.”*

*Jasmin Reed*

## *What do I do once I return to work?*

- 🌀 Nurse your baby just before leaving for work and as soon as you pick him up from child care.
- 🌀 Take a blanket, pillow case, or item of clothing with your scent on it to your baby's child care. Ask your provider to drape it across your baby or wrap your baby with it when feeding a bottle. Your baby will be more likely to take a bottle if your scent is nearby.
- 🌀 When at work, express your milk as often as your baby nurses when you are together.
- 🌀 If you cannot pump at work, go to the restroom to express a little milk to keep your breasts from becoming too full. Do not worry if you cannot keep this milk. It is better to waste this milk and keep up your supply so you can continue to nurse your baby when you are together.
- 🌀 Your baby may want to nurse more often in the evening or whenever you are together. That is normal and will help you keep up your milk supply.
- 🌀 Breastmilk is best, but you can combine breastfeeding with formula feeding if you need to.
- 🌀 Speak to your peer counselor or lactation consultant right away if you have any problems or questions.
- 🌀 Take one day at a time and be willing to try new ways to make breastfeeding a success. Be proud of all your efforts.



*Nurse your baby just before leaving for work.*

The Texas Department of State Health Services asks businesses to help working mothers breastfeed for as long as they want. To learn how to help your work place become designated as a Mother-Friendly Worksite, call (512) 458-7111, extension 6917.

For breastfeeding help and information call 1 (800) 514-6667.



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